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United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains an account of the activities undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in accordance with its mandate during the period from July 2008 to June 2009.

During that period, the revitalized Regional Centre expanded its scope of action and achieved continental reach. It undertook and initiated activities covering an increased number of issues related to peace and disarmament, and did so in a majority of African subregions.

The continental scope of the Regional Centre's programmes went hand-in-hand with a strengthening of its partnerships with the African Union and subregional organizations that now collaborate closely with it.

The numerous requests that the Regional Centre has received and continues to receive, along with an upsurge of interest on the part of the States of the region and other potential donors, reflect the fact that during the current reporting period, the Regional Centre achieved its goal of becoming recognized as the major expertise centre for peace and disarmament in Africa, and as a partner that can make useful and worthwhile contributions.

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The Secretary-General expresses his appreciation to the General Assembly for having taken measures that have contributed to the financial revitalization of the Regional Centre and its capacity for effective and sustainable action. He also wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Togo and the United Kingdom, as well as to the European Union. Their contributions in cash and in kind, in addition to funds from the regular budget of the Organization, have provided the opportunity to develop and implement key programmes for peace and security in Africa.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/80, by which the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the necessary support to the Regional Centre for greater achievements and results; to facilitate close cooperation between the Centre and the African Union, in particular in the areas of peace, security and development; and to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the implementation of the resolution.

2. The report covers the period from July 2008 to June 2009. A financial statement on the status of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa for the biennium 2007-2008 is contained in the annex.

II. Functioning of the Centre

3. The Regional Centre was established in 1986 with headquarters in Lomé pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/151 G. It comes under, and is supervised by, the Office for Disarmament Affairs in the Secretariat, which coordinates input from the relevant United Nations organs, programmes and agencies.

4. With the exception of the posts of the Director (P-5), Political Affairs Officer and Deputy Director (P-3), two General Service posts (G-6, G-7), and operating expenses, which are financed from the regular budget of the United Nations, the Regional Centre relies solely on voluntary contributions from Member States and other donors to finance its project activities.

5. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre implemented its programme of work in the following main areas: peace and security; disarmament and arms control; outreach and information; and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and other entities.

III. Objectives and activities of the Regional Centre

6. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/151 G, the Regional Centre is tasked with providing substantive support to African States, at their request and in cooperation with the African Union and other subregional organizations, for their initiatives and efforts to promote peace, ensure arms limitation and disarmament in the region and coordinate regional activities undertaken in Africa.

A. Peace and security

7. Since February 2007, in conjunction with other agencies of the United Nations system and various other partners, the Regional Centre has continued to implement the project called "African security sector reform programme" in Togo. The project is aimed at strengthening security and stability and promoting intervention by security forces within a democratic framework by improving the relationship

between the military and civilians and enhancing the capacities of relevant national actors such as parliamentarians, civil society, and the armed and security forces. Those partners have developed their capacities to ensure that security operations are conducted within a democratic framework. The project is particularly relevant to Togo during the run-up to the 2010 presidential elections. The Regional Centre, which provided support to the Togolese Government during the legislative elections of October 2007, is again offering its technical expertise to help ensure secure elections.

8. That project is part of the technical assistance provided by the Regional Centre to the Togolese Government within the context of implementation of the governance component of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

9. Other activities conducted by the Centre as part of that pilot project have included, inter alia, two training seminars for parliamentarians from Benin and Togo. The first seminar, held from 30 June to 2 July 2008, provided an opportunity for representatives to gain a working knowledge of the principles of good economic and political governance, human rights protection and security sector reform. It was organized in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Togo and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The second seminar, held on 22 and 23 August 2008, provided an opportunity for approximately 60 members of parliamentary defence and security committees from Benin, Togo and other francophone countries to build their capacities with respect to the role and responsibility of the legislator in democratic control and supervision of the defence and security sectors. That second seminar was organized jointly with the African Security Sector Network. These activities were described in a report on activities from February 2007 to December 2008, which was issued in May 2009 with the financial support of France.

10. Also in the context of the pilot project, the Regional Centre held two training seminars for the armed and security forces. From 13 to 15 October 2008, the Centre held a training course for the Togolese armed forces on the principles of disarmament, human rights and international humanitarian law with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Committee of the Red Cross. That seminar provided participants with an opportunity to share their experiences and discuss their views on practical implementation of those principles. On 29 and 30 November 2008, the Centre held its first training seminar outside of Lomé (in Temedja) for senior officers of the Togolese Army on the legal framework for armed forces operations in a democratic context. That seminar followed a previous seminar held from 11 to 13 March 2008 for the military high command in Lomé. Further follow-up to those training seminars is planned for various military units in various towns in Togo during 2009-2010.

11. During the reporting period, the pilot project began to be extended to other African countries. On 21 and 22 January 2009, the Regional Centre provided support for a training seminar on democratic governance in the security sector, held in Abuja in conjunction with the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) and the African Security Sector Network. On 28 and 29 May 2009, in cooperation with the African Security Sector Network, the Centre held a training seminar for African francophone experts on the particular aspects and challenges of

security and judicial sector reform in francophone Africa. The goal of that seminar was to foster the emergence of an approach to security sector reform that takes into account the unique aspects of the francophone institutional and legal environment. The Regional Centre also plans to launch activities to promote democratic governance and security sector reform in seven fragile States in post-conflict situations in West Africa, with support expected from the European Commission through Oxfam (Great Britain).

12. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre also served as the secretariat of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. In that capacity, and with the support and guidance of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Centre provided substantive and technical secretariat services for the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Libreville from 4 to 8 May 2009.

13. During that ministerial meeting, the Standing Advisory Committee adopted a code of conduct for Central African defence and security forces, which was one of the two components of the Sao Tome Initiative. The Standing Advisory Committee decided to submit the code of conduct for approval by the competent ECOWAS bodies, in particular the Defence and Security Commission of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The Committee called on all member States to implement the code of conduct and asked the Centre to support member States in their activities to raise awareness and to disseminate the code.

14. The second component of the Sao Tome Initiative was the drafting of a legal instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. In that connection, the Standing Advisory Committee took note of a document drafted by its secretariat identifying the major elements of various international and regional legal instruments.

15. The Standing Advisory Committee considered the internal and cross-border security situation in Central Africa, and issues relating to governance and the humanitarian and human rights situation. The member States also considered the state of bilateral relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda and between Chad and the Sudan, and developments among the member States of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL).

16. The member States considered the mandate, achievements and future prospects of the Standing Advisory Committee. They concluded that the Committee provides added value to consideration of issues relating to peace and security in Central Africa. They reaffirmed the need for the Committee not only to strengthen its relations with the Security Council, in particular through presentations to the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, but also to strengthen cooperation with the ECOWAS secretariat. The twenty-eighth ministerial meeting also provided an opportunity for the Committee to consider questions relating to cross-border crime in Central Africa, in particular piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the growing insecurity on the land borders of member States.

17. At the conclusion of its proceedings, the Standing Advisory Committee welcomed the revitalization of its work and the significant improvements in the substantive and logistical organization of the twenty-eighth ministerial meeting, whose procedures are now consistent with those of the General Assembly. The

member States adopted the Libreville Declaration, in which, inter alia, they undertook to contribute on a regular basis to the Committee's trust fund to support its activities, and to mobilize resources with various partners at both the national and international levels.

B. Arms control and disarmament

Control of small arms and light weapons

18. From 24 to 26 November 2008 in Arusha, at the invitation of the African Union Commission, the Regional Centre took part in the first meeting of the small arms and light weapons steering committee established by the Commission. The Centre shared with representatives from African subregional organizations its experience and expertise in combating illicit small arms and light weapons transfers.

19. The steering committee plans to hold regular meetings with regional and subregional entities examining questions related to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa with a view to developing a coherent continental strategy on the issue.

20. The Regional Centre launched its new project on regulating small arms brokering in Africa. Activities under that project focus on the countries of East Africa in cooperation with the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) and with the financial support of Austria. It seeks to strengthen the capacities of national focal points for small arms and light weapons control and for information exchange through the establishment of a database on brokers and a registry of arms brokering licenses. The Centre has already initiated a series of consultations with Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania and representatives of RECSA. Consultations with other RECSA member States are to follow.

21. The project is a continuation of the Small Arms Transparency and Control Regime in Africa (SATCRA) project implemented from October 2003 to December 2005 in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa and Togo.

22. On 9 and 10 June 2009, the Regional Centre provided technical expertise and logistical support for a seminar on transparency in the transfer of conventional arms in West Africa. The Centre offered a regional perspective and advocated coherent and universal participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

23. The Centre and the Office for Disarmament Affairs organized a meeting of Southern and East African States to discuss the outcome of and ensure follow-up of the decisions of the third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That meeting, held on 8 and 9 June 2009 in Kigali, will take stock of achievements at the subregional level with a view to implementation of the recommendations issued during the third Biennial Meeting. Similar meetings will be held for West Africa and Central Africa.

24. In December 2008, the Centre, the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme and the West African Action Network on Small Arms launched a training and capacity-building follow-up project for civil society organizations in West Africa on

practical disarmament and peacebuilding. That project will constitute the sequel to the Centre's subregional training seminar for trainers, held from 12 to 15 November 2007, and will extend its coverage. The supplementary training will certify that the first generation of trainers has retained the information they were taught, provide an opportunity for that first generation of trainers to transmit the knowledge and techniques they have learned to local actors in civil society, and promote exchanges among actors in various targeted areas. The project partners intend to conduct two training seminars in two different zones with a view to using the first generation of trainers to train new trainers. The first seminar will be held in zone 1, consisting of Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal. The second seminar will be held in zone 2, consisting of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

25. On 23 and 27 February 2009 the Regional Centre held high-level consultations in Abuja with the ECOWAS Commission. The consultations were aimed at implementing a project to support the ECOWAS small arms unit and Small Arms Control Programme, as well as their subregional small arms control initiatives. The objectives of the project include harmonizing national legislation, building the capacity of national commissions, establishing national small arms and light weapons registers, and developing a subregional weapons database. The project has received financial support from Austria.

26. The Regional Centre is taking action to expand the scope of the small arms and light weapons register, established in the context of the Small Arms Transparency and Control Regime in Africa project (SATCRA), to include instances of brokering in small arms and light weapons.

27. On 15 and 16 April 2009, the Regional Centre organized a seminar in Lomé for Central and West African civil society to raise awareness of and promote a treaty on the arms trade. The seminar was organized in cooperation with the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and the West Africa Action Network on Small Arms. Representatives of civil society had an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences and formulate a joint strategy for more effective advocacy with States. In the course of the meetings, the Regional Centre presented the deliberations and recommendations of the open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/240 of 24 December 2008.[1]

28. The seminar also prepared West African civil society to take part in the Regional Seminar organized for States by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). The seminar was held in Dakar on 28 and 29 April 2009. The Regional Centre offered UNIDIR its technical expertise in organizing the Seminar, and gave a presentation on the impact of arms transfers on security and development in Africa.

29. The Regional Centre continued to provide technical assistance to Togo's National Commission to Combat the Illicit Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Regional Centre assisted the National Commission in drafting a report on its investigation of the impact of light weapons on the population. The Centre also made a statement as rapporteur at the validation seminar on 10 and 11 November 2008.

[1] See document A/63/334.

30. On 12 to 14 May 2009, the Regional Centre and Togo's National Commission jointly organized a training course in Lomé for members of the National Commission, armed forces and civil society organizations.

C. Information and awareness-raising activities

31. States and other actors can refer to the Regional Council website (www.unrec.org) for information on peace and disarmament in Africa. The website is available in English and French.

32. As a follow-up to the Lomé training seminar held from 21 to 25 April 2008, the Regional Centre took part in a seminar for the promotion of and universal accession to the Inhumane Weapons Convention and its additional protocols. The seminar, held in Rabat on 18 and 19 November 2008 with financial support from the European Union, was intended for Middle Eastern and Mediterranean States.

33. The Regional Centre has continued to promote various day-long and week-long disarmament events. On 19 September 2008, in preparation for the International Day of Peace observed on 21 September, the Centre convened a conference to showcase its activities and draw the attention of the media to peace and disarmament issues. In the context of the thirtieth anniversary of international Disarmament Week, and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/72 B of 1995 inviting non-governmental organizations to take an active part in Disarmament Week, the Centre organized an awareness-raising day for civil society and the media on the dangers of small arms and light weapons. On that occasion, the Centre presented two of its publications. The first was a training manual on capacity-building for practical disarmament and peacebuilding in West Africa. The manual is intended for grass-roots and civil society organizations. It contains 16 courses on topics such as control mechanisms for light weapons; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in West Africa; the institutional framework for peacebuilding; and capacity-building in civil society. The manual was used at the training seminar for West African non-governmental organizations. The second publication presented by the Regional Centre was a handbook for security forces on maintaining law and order during elections. The handbook was originally intended for the ECOWAS Commission. With the cooperation of the United Nations Office for West Africa, it will now be substantially edited and disseminated to a wider audience.

34. On 7 November 2008, in the context of the Global Week of Action against Cluster Bombs, the Regional Centre organized a press conference together with the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)-Togo and Handicap International. The press conference mobilized support among the Togolese authorities and members of the Togolese coalition against cluster bombs for the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

35. Lastly, from 15 to 21 June 2009, the Regional Centre and WANEP-Togo conducted joint activities during the Global Week of Action against Gun Violence.

D. Cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and other entities

36. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre strengthened its cooperation with subregional organizations in Africa, particularly in East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa.

37. From 17 to 22 August 2008, the Regional Centre took part in a subregional seminar on building the capacity of States of the Great Lakes region and East Africa to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The seminar was organized in Kampala by the African Centre for Strategic Studies. In the course of the seminar, the Regional Centre shared its expertise and experience on those issues, including the role of the United Nations in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The seminar gave participants an opportunity to review the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol and to formulate recommendations. These recommendations have now been included in the 2009-2010 plan of action of the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA).

38. Following the seminar, the Regional Centre and RECSA decided to conclude a memorandum of understanding in which RECSA will formally recognize the Regional Centre as a technical partner for the development of joint projects. The Regional Centre has been invited to participate as an expert at a number of RECSA events, including a seminar on the implementation of the Nairobi Protocol and another on arms brokering in East Africa.

39. From 1 to 8 February, the Regional Centre took part in a meeting of experts organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The event was entitled "Regional Expert Meeting on Promoting the Rule of Law and Human Security in Eastern Africa: Programme of Action for 2009 to 2012". On the sidelines, the Centre signed a letter of understanding with the Office concerning joint training sessions for instructors, which will address special investigation techniques in East Africa and the Great Lakes region. In that context, similar training sessions are being organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

40. The Regional Centre and ECOWAS have decided to conclude a memorandum of understanding setting forth the terms of their cooperation on small arms and light weapons in three specific areas: building the capacity of civil society and national commissions, harmonizing national legislation and managing information and databases.

41. From 26 to 29 October 2009, the Regional Centre took part in the ECOWAS ministerial meeting held in Praia, at which a joint stance against illegal drug trafficking in West Africa was adopted. The contribution made by the Regional Centre allowed ECOWAS to take into account not only the link between drug trafficking and the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons but their respective impact on the economic and social development of the countries of the subregion.

42. The Regional Centre was invited to contribute to the training programmes of national committees to suppress light weapons in West Africa that were organized by the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) and held in Accra from 17 to 30 November 2008, and 6 to 9 April and 1 to 3 June 2009. The Regional Centre was given responsibility for a certain number of courses and also

contributed to the revision of the training manual developed by KAIPTC. The Regional Centre was selected as a member of the steering committee for the programme.

43. From 24 to 26 November 2008, the Regional Centre took part in an expert group meeting held in Conakry and organized by the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) on the role of the security sector in securing electoral processes. The outcome of that meeting was 44 recommendations addressed to States, political parties, civil society, the media, ECOWAS and UNOWA.

44. The Regional Centre and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, with the participation of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for West Africa, jointly organized a discussion, which was held in Lomé on 13 and 14 May 2009, on the integration of the Conakry recommendations at the national level in Togo. At the conclusion of that discussion, the Regional Centre made preparations for the implementation in Togo of some of those recommendations. The Regional Centre also engaged in preliminary discussions with a view to replicating that process in other West African countries where elections are to be held in the short and medium term.

45. The partnership between the Regional Centre and civil society was also strengthened. The Regional Centre and the West African Action Network on Small Arms (RASALAO) jointly organized the second civil society forum on light weapons, held in Freetown on 17 and 18 December 2008. Participants considered the structure and role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the fight against small arms and light weapons in West Africa. The Regional Centre presided over a panel on the role of journalists in preventing armed violence in West Africa.

46. On 15 December 2008, the Regional Centre and the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme concluded a memorandum of understanding on the joint implementation of a project, to be carried out in collaboration with RASALAO, to train West African civil society organizations in practical disarmament and peacebuilding.

47. Finally, the Regional Centre initiated new partnerships in Southern Africa, where it is already carrying out new activities, including the organization of a seminar in collaboration with the Regional Centre on Small Arms and the Southern African Development Community concerning the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Southern and East Africa.

IV. Operational situation of the Centre

A. Financial situation

48. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/151 G, the Regional Centre was established on the basis of existing resources and voluntary contributions. During the course of the reporting period, funds totalling $147,496.39[2] were received for project implementation.

[2] Togo $127,496.39 and Turkey $20,000.

49. The Secretary-General would like to express his gratitude to the Governments of Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom and to the European Union for their actual or pledged financial contributions and their support for Regional Centre programmes. He thanks the Government of Togo, in particular, for the payment of the arrears of its contribution to the operating costs of the Regional Centre for 2002-2003 and 2005-2008, which were received in October 2008. He would also like to thank the International Organization of la Francophonie, the International Action Network on Small Arms, the African Security Sector Network and Oxfam Great Britain for their support for Regional Centre activities. Information on the status of the trust fund for the Centre for 2008 is annexed hereto.

50. The Secretary-General would like to remind States members of the African Union that at the session held in Khartoum from 16 to 21 January 2006, the Executive Council of the African Union launched an appeal for voluntary contributions to the trust fund for the Centre (EX.CL/243 (VIII) Add.7).

B. Staffing

51. During the reporting period, pursuant to resolution 62/216, the recruitment process was finalized for three posts funded by the regular budget, namely, a political affairs officer, an information assistant and an administrative and financial assistant. Furthermore, in September 2008, the Regional Centre welcomed an associate expert funded by the Government of the Netherlands and recruited a United Nations international volunteer. The Regional Centre has identified staff members to act as focal points for Central Africa, East Africa and West Africa.

52. Finally, thanks to the payment of funds specifically designated for project-related activities, the Regional Centre has been able to recruit project managers to assist it in carrying out its activities. Four officers were engaged on fixed-term contracts and five others on special service agreements. The Regional Centre has also benefited from the contributions of interns, most of whom undertook research and project support activities.

V. Conclusion

53. During the reporting period, the Regional Centre successfully pursued and completed the revitalization process and implemented activities aimed at consolidating the benefits of that process.

54. The Regional Centre also reaffirmed its role at the continental level, creating networks and partnerships at both the pan-African and the African subregional levels. Further, the Centre benefited from the synergies between United Nations agencies and programmes and with various NGOs. In particular, it extended its operations to regions in East Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes and Central Africa.

55. The Regional Centre has continued to successfully implement its mandate, provide technical assistance and share its wide-ranging expertise with African countries, intergovernmental and subregional organizations and civil society. The

Centre also contributes to an integrated, coordinated and multipolar approach to questions of disarmament, peace and security.

56. The Secretary-General thanks the General Assembly for having taken measures which have greatly contributed to the financial revitalization and effective and sustainable operation of the Regional Centre. He would also like to thank those whose extrabudgetary contributions in cash and in kind have been added to the regular budget of the Organization, thereby permitting the Centre to operate, and to devise and implement programmes that are essential to peace and security in Africa.

Annex

2008 financial status of the trust fund for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa[a]

In United States dollars

Fund balances at 31 December 2007	1 124 973
Income from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008	
Voluntary contributions[b]	147 496
Interest income	43 555
Other income	62 815
Subtotal	**253 866**
Expenditure from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2008	986 163
Programme support costs	128 201
Subtotal	**1 114 364**
Prior period adjustments	5
Fund balances at 31 December 2008	264 480

[a] Information taken from 2008 statement of income and expenditure, ending on 31 December 2008. No contributions were received during the period 1 January to 30 June 2009.

[b] Togo $127,496.39 and Turkey $20,000.